

RE: Support Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

January 26, 2023

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Maria Aron and I live in Portland. I am writing to testify in strong support for Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, which will ensure every eligible Oregonian can register to vote, update their voter registration, and vote in elections based on where they resided prior to incarceration.

The right to vote is enshrined in our constitution and fundamental to a vibrant and participatory democracy. Yet, around 12,000 people in Oregon are currently denied their right to vote, leading to the disproportionate disenfranchisement of low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Latine people. Guaranteeing the Right to Vote fulfills the promise of our democracy while improving public safety, and addressing racial and socioeconomic inequities.

As a citizen concerned about public safety, and as a volunteer leader in gun violence prevention, I have witnessed the ripple effects of violence in our communities. Successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals is key to a safer Oregon. We can engage and inspire these members of our community to actively participate in our Democracy all while holding them accountable for their actions. Guaranteeing the right to vote for all Oregonians will make our state a more secure and just place to live

I am not alone in my support for this important bill. This legislation is supported by over 40 civil rights organizations, faith-based groups, as well as dozens of currently and formerly incarcerated people. Please ensure that Guaranteeing the Right to Vote, SB 579, is passed out of committee.

Thank you,

Maria Aron